

DAKOTA PACK

MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD • FALL 2009

730th ASMC

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DAKOTA PACK

Magazine of the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard



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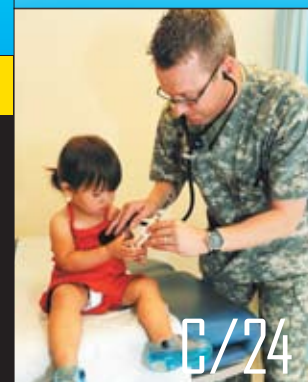
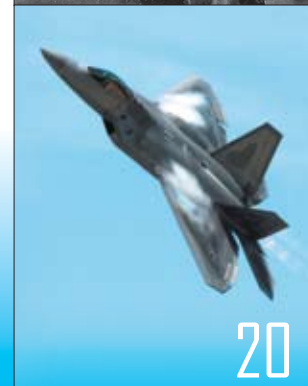
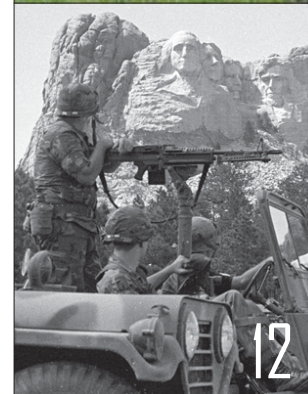
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Capt. David Axtman of Sioux Falls, member of the 730th Area Support Medical Company, distracts 18-month-old Marley Sunshine of Fort Thompson, with his identification badge to take her vital signs during their annual training June 15 at the Fort Thompson Indian Health Service Center.
(Army photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)



114th CES returns from deployment

By Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland

SIoux FALLS – Forty members of the 114th Fighter Wing Civil Engineer Squadron, South Dakota Air National Guard, returned home on July 1 just in time to spend the 4th of July holiday with family and friends. Three members of the team returned earlier this year and the remaining nine members will return by September. The 52 members of the unit have been deployed to Southwest Asia since December 2008.

The 114th CES PRIME BEEF (Base Engineer Emergency Force) team was deployed to support combat airpower in Overseas Contingency Operations and worked on numerous projects to support critical facilities in the area. Base sustainment was the primary mission for the team at their deployed location. Airmen performed duties including plumbing, carpentry, power production, electrical, emergency management, engineering and project management, heavy equipment operations, and heating and air conditioning.

"These Airmen did an outstanding job maintaining the airbase infrastructure and providing support for all military and Department of Defense members flying into and out of the airfield," said Lt. Col. Alvin L. Punt, 114th CES commander. "It is great to get this group back home safely to their families and friends, and we look forward to the return of those Airmen that are still deployed."

Members of the unit remain at the deployed location to ensure transition of the next team and will return over the next few months with the last remaining member from the unit returning in September.

Camp Rapid breaks ground on new facilities

CAMP RAPID – The South Dakota National Guard broke ground on the new \$29 million Joint Forces Headquarters Readiness Center on Tuesday, May 26 and the \$14 million Barracks and Education building on Friday, July 17, both located at Camp Rapid.

The new Readiness Center will consolidate services and support for nearly 4,500 Soldiers and Airmen of the SDNG. State headquarters directorates and staff currently are scattered in buildings across the camp.

The construction of the new 132,000-square-foot headquarters building is expected to take two years to complete.

Construction also began on the Barracks and Education building and is the final piece of a three-building construction project to upgrade living quarters and facilities for the camp's various training and personnel mobilization needs.

The 60,000-square-foot, three-story structure will consist of a large auditorium, classrooms, learning center, battalion and company supply, and battalion headquarters along with private and semi-private sleeping quarters.

Design character is similar to buildings 801 and 803 located on the east side of Camp Rapid. The new barracks/classroom building will complete the vision of providing quality facilities for Soldiers' training. Camp Rapid will be able to house 600 Soldiers at the completion of all the construction efforts.

The finished buildings will meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards by incorporating recycled materials, natural lighting, energy conservation and other environmentally friendly features.

Camp Rapid receives Beautification Award

CAMP RAPID – The South Dakota National Guard was awarded the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce Beautification Award on Tuesday, June 23, for the construction and landscaping of the northwest gate area of Camp Rapid.

The Beautification Award is given to businesses, organizations and community groups that improve the physical beauty or quality of life of the city and surrounding community.

Air Guard Operations building dedicated

By 1st Lt. Michael Frye

JOE FOSS FIELD – The South Dakota Air National Guard took pause to recognize a former leader with the dedication of the Operations building at Joe Foss Field. Former Commander, Adjutant General, and Director of the Air National Guard, retired Maj. Gen. Philip G. Killey returned to Sioux Falls July 25 for the dedication of the building in his name and to be recognized for the contributions he has made to the unit, the state of South Dakota, and the Air National Guard.

"He's an inspiration to a lot of people," said Maj. Gen. Steve Doohen, adjutant general for South Dakota. "I think it's so fitting this Operations Building is named after him because his fingerprints are all over this unit."



New Operations building at Joe Foss Field.

Things we're doing now were started by him years ago."

"There's absolutely no doubt in my mind that Joe Foss Field has the best facilities of any Air National Guard unit in this country," said Col. Russ Walz, 114th Fighter Wing commander. "That doesn't happen by accident. It comes from outstanding community support, outstanding congressional support, and it comes from great leaders with vision like Gen. Killey."

The dedication was attended by a host of distinguished guests, which included several past senior enlisted advisors, commanders, adjutant generals and state leaders.

"This is very special. We may live in Arizona, but our hearts are in South Dakota and our closest friends are in South Dakota. It's great to be home, and what a homecoming to have this dedication to this fabulous Ops Building," said Killey.

The Operations Building officially opened on May 5, 2007, following 18 months of construction, replacing the previous Operations building, which had been built in the early 1950s.

New Civil Engineer building nearing completion

JOE FOSS FIELD – Change isn't always a positive sign of progress. But if the ever-changing atmosphere of Joe Foss Field is any indication, change for the SDANG means growing and moving forward.

There are a few buildings on base that are pretty old. In fact, Hangar 40 and Building 47 have been around since WWII. The latter, built in 1942, has always been home to the Civil Engineer Squadron. By the end of this year, CES will have a new place to call home.

Construction of the new facility started in October 2008, just east of where Building 47 currently stands. The \$7.5 million project is currently about 60 percent complete and should be finished by the end of November.

Though the main reason for the new building was due to the age of the current one, the size of Building 47 is also an issue. During a UTA, there are about 75 Airmen using the building at any given time. The current facility does not have an area large enough to house the entire squadron for roll call and commander's calls. They hold those large group meetings in the garage. The new building will have a classroom large enough for the whole squadron including the fire department.



Civil Engineer building construction at Joe Foss Field.

Lt. Col. Al Punt, commander, 114th CES, said he is really looking forward to the new location for the better training facilities and extra space.

Building 49, as it will be known, will give CES an additional 8,200 square feet of space. The administration area and shop will take up all 24,200 square feet of the building that is currently being constructed. There will also be a 6,000 square foot cold storage facility (Building 46) that will be built as soon as the current project is finished.

The 66-year-old Building 47 will be torn down in fiscal year 2010. There are not any plans for that area at this time. It will be planted with grass and left open until it is deemed necessary to put a new building in its place.

153rd Engineer Battalion changes command

HURON - Lt. Col. Joseph Eining, Dell Rapids, assumed command of the 153rd Engineer Battalion, South Dakota Army National Guard, during a change of command ceremony on Saturday, Aug. 1, at the Huron armory.

Eining took over the responsibilities from former commander Lt. Col. Michael Werdel, Piedmont, who served in the command position since January of 2008.

The mission of the 153rd is to provide full-spectrum engineering operations to include: command and control, administrative, logistical and training support to its subordinate units and ensure units are ready to support state and national emergencies and homeland defense.

200th Engineer Company changes command, new 1st Sergeant

PIERRE - 1st Lt. James Forbes, Sturgis, assumed command of the 200th Engineer Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, during a change of command ceremony on Sunday, July 12, at the Pierre armory.

Forbes took over the responsibilities from former commander Capt. Nathan Jolley, Sturgis, who served in the command position since July of 2007.

Following the change of command ceremony, there was a pinning ceremony for the new 1st Sgt. Robert Slaba, Harold. He assumed the duties from 1st Sgt. Timothy Long, Kennebec.

The mission of the 200th is to provide personnel and equipment to transport, assemble, disassemble, retrieve, and maintain all standard U.S. Army bridging systems, including improved ribbon bridges and rafts. This unit has a secondary mission to provide transportation of cargo that is configured for the palletized loading system.

730th ASMC change of command

VERMILLION - Maj. David Fossum, Brookings, took command of the Area Support Medical Company, South Dakota Army National Guard, during a change of command ceremony on Saturday, July 11 at the Vermillion armory.

Fossum assumed the responsibilities from former commander Maj. Christopher Storms, Manhattan, Kan., who served in the command position since September of 2005.

The mission of the 730th is to provide valuable medical services for all National Guard units across the state. The unit consists of doctors, nurses, physician assistants, combat medics, radiological technicians and a variety of medical support personnel.

Forward Support Company, 153rd change of command ceremony

PARKSTON - Capt. Joseph Bacorn, Piedmont, took command of the Forward Support Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion, South Dakota Army National Guard, during a

change of command ceremony on Sunday, Aug. 2, at the Parkston armory.

Bacorn assumed the responsibilities from former commander Capt. Brian Allmendinger, Gregory, who served in the command position since August of 2007.

The mission of the FSC, 153rd, is to provide direct combat sustainment support to the engineer battalion in the form of maintenance and logistics and to support state and national emergencies and homeland defense.

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Artillery battalion commands base in Kuwait

By Capt. Martin Yost

1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery

CAMP PATRIOT, Kuwait – The 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery of the South Dakota Army National Guard, took command of Camp Patriot in Kuwait, during a change of command ceremony on July 29 and assumed operational control from the 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery of the Hawaii Army National Guard.

The more than 300 members of the 147th from units in Watertown, Aberdeen, Yankton and Mitchell, will now provide command and control of operations at Camp Patriot for the next year during their support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 147th arrived on Camp Patriot in early July after being mobilized for deployment in April.

“We are ready to take over this mission and our counterparts, the 1st Battalion, 487th Hawaii National Guard, have done an excellent job working with us the last month to ensure we are fully prepared to carry on this mission,” said Commander Lt. Col. David Chase during the ceremony.

“This is a very unique and dynamic mission with many moving pieces; we work jointly with the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard on our SECFOR (security force) mission at two separate locations,” continued Chase. “The camp command cell is responsible for the health and welfare, and day to day well being of a large tenant and transient population – Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Marines.”

This mission for the 147th also has a very unique role with the Kuwait military. Camp Patriot is the only U.S. military camp located inside of a Kuwait military facility, which is a Kuwaiti Naval Base.

“One of the most important missions is the building of host nation relations as we work jointly every day with our Kuwait allies,” said Chase as he talked about this relationship with Kuwaiti military officials on hand for the ceremony.

Prior to the 147th arriving in Kuwait, the battalion had trained at Fort Hood, Texas, for two months, Fort Chaffee, Ark., for three weeks, part of their two-week annual training at Camp Guernsey, Wyo., and every drill weekend for the last year training for this mission.



Command Sgt. Maj. George Arends (right) and Lt. Col. David Chase unroll the 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery flag during a change of command ceremony on July 29 at Camp Patriot in Kuwait. The 147th assumed operational control from the 1st Battalion, 487th Field Artillery of the Hawaii Army National Guard, and will be responsible for the health and welfare, and day to day well being of a large tenant and transient military population, as well as provide force protection for the base.

“If you think about it, we have spent every day for the last 13 months preparing for this mission and we are ready,” said Chase. “Our Soldiers have spent a huge amount of time away from friends, family and their civilian jobs to prepare for the mission to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.”

Following the change of command ceremony, transfer of authority documents were signed by command leadership.

On July 30, the final step had been completed to officially recognize South Dakota’s 1st Battalion, 147th FA assuming operational control of Camp Patriot, with the lowering of the Hawaii state flag and the raising of the South Dakota flag – signifying the 147th motto “Steel Rain,” is now in command to all those who live, visit and work on Camp Patriot.



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery of Watertown, Aberdeen, Yankton and Mitchell, raise the South Dakota state flag in the security forces compound at Camp Patriot, Kuwait on July 30.

Outdoor adventure reinvigorates returning veterans

By Capt. Anthony Deiss
Deputy Public Affairs Officer

RAPID CITY – When Maj. Stephen Sewell III was in Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan, in October 2008 training the Afghan National Police, he received an e-mail offering outdoor adventures to returning veterans. With the end of his tour months away, Sewell submitted his name for a dog sledding expedition in the northern Minnesota wilderness; thinking he would not have a chance at being selected. To his surprise he was.

"I couldn't believe I was chosen for the expedition," said Sewell of Black Hawk. "I'm so glad I applied for the adventure. It was a great experience."

Sewell applied for the adventure through the Outward Bound Veterans Program; a program funded by the Sierra Club, an environmental protection organization, and operated by Outward Bound, an outfitter and guide service. The program is designed to help give returning veterans of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom a chance to readjust and transition back to civilian life after serving overseas.

"Everything is paid for – from the expedition to the cost of the flight – the Sierra Club really takes care of the veteran," said Sewell. "The people from Outward Bound were amazing as well, a non-profit organization that are truly professional and care about people."

The program also offers hiking, canoeing, rock climbing, sailing and whitewater rafting in addition to the dog sledding adventure.

"There are many adventures that are offered for the outdoors enthusiast. I chose dog sledding because it was the most unique and challenging expedition on the list," said Sewell, a member of the 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute), South Dakota Army National Guard.

According to Sewell, the goal of the program includes helping participating veterans build a supportive community with other veterans, facilitating discussions on readjustment and transition challenges, and re-energizing and reinvigorating veterans' spirits with adventures and challenges in the beautiful outdoors.

"For every service member that has deployed, there is usually a readjustment back to their normal life on some level," said Sewell, who deployed as part of an Embedded Training Team. "This program really helped to ease my transition after I returned home."

In February 2009, Sewell, along with five other veterans from across the country, experienced an eight-day expedition in Minnesota's Boundary

Maj. Stephen Sewell III of the South Dakota Army National Guard, stops for a moment while skiing in Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area for a week in February as he participates in the Outward Bound Veterans Program; a program designed to help give returning veterans of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom a chance to readjust and transition back to civilian life after serving overseas.



Maj. Stephen Sewell III of the South Dakota Army National Guard, pets two of his team members "Squirt" and "Calvin," while dog sledding in Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area in February while participating in the Outward Bound Veterans Program.

Waters Canoe Area; a million acres of wilderness, with over 1,000 pristine lakes and streams.

"All the veterans came from different backgrounds and life experiences, but the common bond we shared was our military backgrounds," said Sewell.

Sewell admits his first ideas of the dog sledding adventure were not quite what he'd expected but delivered all the same.

"Contrary to visions I had of the fast-moving Iditarod sled-dog race; dog sledding in portages and frozen lakes provided a real physical challenge I didn't expect," said Sewell. "Righting the sled after it tipped on tight turns, cross-country skiing over slick-as-slime ice-covered lakes, and scouting safe passages for the dogs and sleds required physical stamina."

Sewell said the experience is not for someone who wants everything done for them, and the staff was there to merely guide the group and advise them.

"Our team was responsible for setting up camp, taking care of the dogs; rigging them up, feeding them and caring for them, and making decisions on routes and techniques to get the sleds through some pretty challenging portages," said Sewell.

The team consisted of two sleds, 11 dogs and eight persons (two guides and six veterans). The team traveled four to six miles per day with half of the team cross-country skiing ahead of the sleds – to check ice thickness and to recon trails – and the other half to drive the sleds. At night, the team set



up camp on the shore of one of the many frozen lakes in the Boundary Waters area, and slept under the stars.

On one night, the veterans were required to camp and sleep alone; separated from the other team members. According to Sewell, this experience is designed to teach self-reliance and encourage self-reflection.

"The first day seemed like chaos dealing with 11 strong dogs that want to do nothing but pull a sled," said Sewell. "By the middle of day two, I knew each dog's name and their individual personality."

According to Sewell, learning the personalities of the dogs is critical to learning how to build and mush a successful dog team.

"By the end of the experience, I wanted to take the dogs home with me!" he said. "I have never seen an animal as dedicated to its job as a sled dog. Bird dogs have nothing on these guys!"

The Outward Bound adventures are designed to be more than just experiencing the outdoors and dog sledding; they are designed to provide a therapeutic environment that can help veterans transition from an overseas combat deployment to being home with family and friends, and for Sewell, it did just that.

"Being with veterans who fully understand the challenges of readjustment after the experience of deployment was extremely helpful to me," said Sewell. "I recommend this program for anyone wanting to find adventure, a challenge and friendship."

For more information on the Outward Bound Veterans Program, or the organizations that support it, go to the following Web sites:

- <http://www.outwardbound.org/index.cfm/do/cp.veterans>
- <http://www.outwardbound.org>
- <http://www.sierraclub.org>

114th Fighter Wing trains in Canada during Maple Flag 42

By Master Sgt. John Asselin
Maple Flag 42, U.S. Forces Public Affairs

COLD LAKE, Alberta – Aircraft and crews from the U.S. Air Force participated with a combined force in Canada as part of Maple Flag 42, providing pilots and crews with realistic air combat training in May and June.

Sponsored by the Canadian Forces 4 Wing and held at Cold Lake, Maple Flag provides realistic air combat training for pilots, according to Canadian Forces Maj. Carl Cottrell, Maple Flag commander.

"Maple Flag is similar to Red Flag where we provide junior pilots with their first 10 sorties in a combat environment," he said. "We have also migrated to a more joint force to conduct operations with a large force deployment and support a joint component on the ground. It is representative of the modern battlefield."

Participating in Maple Flag also gives U.S. units an extra dimension of training they couldn't get at Red Flag, said Col. Mike Meyers, U.S. Expeditionary Forces commander.

"It's a different scenario and a different place," said Meyers, who is deployed from the South Dakota Air National Guard. "We deploy out of the country, so we get the whole expeditionary piece. Instead of working with our allies in the states, we work with them in their backyard."

Some participants of the exercise include units from Mountain Home Air Force Base (AFB), Idaho, the South Dakota Air National Guard, Tinker AFB, Okla., Nellis AFB, Nev., Canadian Forces, Singapore, Great Britain and the Netherlands.

Working with different units and forces from other countries creates new training opportunities for pilots participating in the exercise, according to Capt. Jeremy Doohen, a South Dakota Air National Guard pilot with the 175th Fighter Squadron from Sioux Falls.



Capt. Jeremy Doohen inserts an air combat maneuvering instrumentation card inside his right wing June 4 as Staff Sgt. Derek Lauer, 114th Phase Docks, looks on. The ACMI card enables Maple Flag observers and mission planners to track pilots in real time during their simulated air wars.

(Air Force photo by Senior Airman Larry Reid Jr.)



Staff Sgt. Adam Dolney, 114th Fighter Wing crew chief, examines the exhaust in preparation for a training mission during exercise Maple Flag 42 June 4. Maple Flag is a Canadian-sponsored and ACC-supported exercise, that provides aircrews simulated air and ground combat training to coalition forces in a NATO environment. (Air Force photo by Senior Airman Larry Reid Jr.)

"We're used to working with our unit, so we have to get used to working with other units and countries," Doohen said. "We're used to flying with only six of our own aircraft out there, here we are working with other groups. You really have to have situational awareness of what the other groups are doing – there is so much going on out there. We're also working with dissimilar aircraft – you don't know who the bad guys are until they are close. It's good training."

Maple Flag was developed in 1978 in response to the finding that most wartime aircraft losses occurred during an aircrew's first ten combat missions. The exercise provides junior aircrews with these critical first 10 missions, allowing them to train for large coalition operations in a structured academic environment.

147th Army Band performs in Colorado

Story and photos by Sgt. Theanne Tangen
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Staff Sgt. Jeff Soukup of Sioux Falls, member of the 147th Army Band, South Dakota Army National Guard of Mitchell, plays a trumpet solo during the Sgt. Rock ensemble on July 22 for the community of Manitou Springs, Colo., during their two-week annual training.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – Members of South Dakota's 147th Army Band displayed their musical talents throughout Colorado during the unit's annual training from July 18-Aug. 1.

The band, which consisted of 36 musicians for this year's training, performed for both military and civilian community events during their two-week trip, performing in Manitou Springs, Soda Springs Park and at the city of Pueblo's Xcel Energy River Walk entertainment stage.

Tourists Gary and Birdi Blocker of Fort Worth, Texas, expressed their reaction to the 147th's performance at Soda Springs.

"It was impressive, the patriotic music made me proud to be an American. The jazz and rock bands made me want to get up and dance!" said Blocker of the free band performance.

Band director for the 147th, Chief Warrant Officer Terry Beckler of Aberdeen, understands how the band's music is inspirational and powerful to many people, and finds the band/audience relationship rewarding.

"One of the rewards of being a performer is the connection with the people in the audience when you play patriotic songs," said Beckler. "There are veterans you are honoring or audience members who are moved by what you are doing. We are upholding that patriotic tradition and representing the Army to those folks."

The 147th further displayed their musical patriotism and tradition as they played during an uncasing of colors ceremony for the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division stationed at Fort Carson. The band also displayed its talents while playing for a change of command

ceremony and a retirement ceremony during their trip.

While at Fort Carson, the band also performed for a group of civilians and service members at Alternate Escapes, a Department of Defense funded Morale, Welfare and Recreation center.

Staff Sgt. Tim Storly, a trombone player from Aberdeen, values the responsibilities he has as a Soldier in representing himself as a true professional while playing for the band.

"We put a face on the Guard, we go out in the community and perform for the public," said Storly. "The average person in the audience does not always see other Soldiers doing their weekend drills, we take a lot of pride in the way we look and work hard at the shows because we want to leave a positive image."

Soldiers from the 147th Army Band, South Dakota Army National Guard of Mitchell, perform in front of the community of Pueblo, Colo., under the direction of Chief Warrant Officer Terry Beckler of Aberdeen, at the river walk on July 23 during their two-week annual training.



The 147th Army Band Jazz Ensemble, South Dakota Army National Guard of Mitchell, perform in front of the Manitou Springs, Colo., community on July 22 during their two-week annual training.



Keeping the S.D. Guard running

Story and photos by Abby Buehler
Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – There are 23 Soldiers who work at the Combined Support Maintenance Shop #2 (CSMS) in Rapid City. Soldiers who help to supply and maintain 24 of the 67 units in the South Dakota Army National Guard (SDARNG); ensuring units are ready when they are called up for a state emergency mission or to serve in national defense.

It is these mechanics and supply personnel who help to keep more than a third of the SDARNG's units firing on all cylinders, keeping their vehicles and equipment operational and mission ready.

According to Lt. Col. Leslie Wermers, logistics director for the SDARNG, the state's equipment mission capable rate is higher than 90 percent... well above the Army National Guard's historical rate of 70 percent. "Our operational readiness rate is well into the 90s; we have a very robust maintenance program," Wermers said in a July 6 interview.

To maintain this level of readiness, the Soldiers at the CSMS begin each day with a long laundry list of things to accomplish.

For Warrant Officer Gene Fisher, a full-time supply systems technician at the CSMS, this list begins with going through work orders and requisitioning parts for issue, an essential step in keeping the Guard fleet running.

"My job is ensuring the shop has the right repair parts and supplies it needs to complete its mission," said Fisher, of Rapid City and also a member of the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in Pierre.

According to Fisher, if the mechanics don't have the parts, the vehicles and equipment can't be maintained or repaired. "By providing the parts or supplies we need, we provide the equipment readiness for the unit so they can complete their combat mission," said Fisher.

On the other end of the CSMS spectrum is maintenance.

Sgt. Chris Peters, a service maintenance mechanic at the CSMS, spends his days helping to repair and maintain the many vehicles and equipment that rotate through the shop's doors. And although keeping the vehicles fully mission capable is important to Peters, safety is his main concern.



Sgt. Chris Peters, a service maintenance mechanic from Detachment 1, Bravo Company, 139th Brigade Support Battalion in Rapid City, replaces a seal on a Humvee in the Combined Supply Maintenance Shop #2 in Rapid City on July 29.

"Safety. Safety is my primary goal," said Peters, a member of Detachment 1, Bravo Company, 139th Brigade Support Battalion in Rapid City. "We all have to look out for one another when we do things, so we don't put anyone else in danger."

Over the next several months, new equipment will begin arriving for the SDARNG to replace aging, out-dated vehicles. The new equipment consists of Freightliner and Pallatized Loading Systems trucks, along with some more common vehicles such as Humvees and open road trucks.

The fielding of the new equipment is part of a Department of Defense initiative to keep National Guard units on the same level as active duty Army units – receiving the same type of

equipment instead of used equipment from the active component.

With the Army National Guard now a fully integrated operational force into the active component for Overseas Contingency Operations – instead of a strategic reserve – mechanics must stay current with the latest in training and knowledge of the new equipment.

"For a while, it's going to make it tougher to learn new equipment," said Peters. "There are growing pains with new equipment."

The new equipment will also be standardized, making supply and maintenance easier.

Although Fisher and Peters work in different areas at the CSMS, they share the same goal

of supporting and maintaining unit equipment to enable them to complete their missions successfully, and both stress the importance of everyone working together.

"We work with everybody," said Peters. "The military has a thing with building cohesiveness, so every day that you're wearing our nation's uniform, you are working on building that cohesive team."



Warrant Officer Gene Fisher examines a supply rack at the Combined Supply Maintenance Shop #2 in Rapid City on July 29. Fisher is one of the men in the CSMS that orders and sustains the supplies for 24 of the 67 units in the South Dakota Army National Guard.

THE BLACK HATS

Mentoring the future leaders of the Army National Guard

By Abby Buehler
Public Affairs Office



At the 196th Regiment, Regional Training Institute's Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Fort Meade, leaders are in the process of being made every day. Upon entering the grounds, it is a common sight to see officer candidates in formation yelling out commands with ominous figures wearing black hats observing along side. It is these men and women in "Black Hats," for which they are known, who are crucial to the development of these future leaders of the Army National Guard.

Officially known as TACs (Teach, Assess, Counsel), these instructors for the OCS program help to mentor and evaluate enlisted Soldiers from around the country who are hoping to be commissioned as second lieutenants.

"There are only two branches in the military that wear the black hat, and that's the OCS and Airborne School," said Sgt. 1st Class Todd Eipperle, TAC instructor from the 185th Regional Training Institute in Iowa. "It's just to make you instantly recognizable."

TACs oversee and counsel students in everything from their appearance to performance leading other Soldiers.

"My goal as a TAC is very simple; to teach students how to lead Soldiers in combat," said Maj. Stephen Sewell III, OCS company commander. "The ultimate goal is saving lives on the battlefield."

Becoming a TAC requires two weeks of schooling to become an instructor, and an additional week to become a TAC officer/noncommissioned officer (NCO). TAC instructors are usually previous students from the OCS program who show great potential as instructors and are invited back to teach.

At OCS, teaching officer candidates how to perform in a real-world environment is a pertinent goal. OCS goes through three phases that build students into strong leaders.



Officer Candidate Troxel sounds off to TAC Instructor Capt. Kendal during the Phase IB of the Officer Candidate School at the 196th Regiment, Regional Training Institute at Fort Meade on July 11. Phase I is physically challenging and puts officer candidates through a tough conditioning environment. (Army photo by Cadet Kyle Wade)

The course is set up in three phases. Phase I is physically challenging and puts officer candidates through a tough conditioning environment. In Phase II, the atmosphere is more academic. The last phase, Phase III, is where the knowledge and capabilities of the two previous stages are put together and tested.

"When an officer candidate comes to OCS we teach them how to become a successful officer. We teach them the basics of leadership and then we give them challenges," said Sewell, a TAC instructor on and off for nine years. "Then we assess how they do in leadership positions and counsel them on how they did after the assessment."

The TAC's job is not only to make sure the students are learning and developing, but to also advise them.

"They are pretty much here as our mentors," said Officer Candidate Trisha Eining, member of Detachment 1, Forward Support Company. "They're really here to help us get through it and be stronger."

Helping students become stronger is something that TACs want physically and mentally.

Sgt. 1st Class Eipperle, who has been a TAC NCO for five years, commented that his favorite part of his job was seeing the students graduate from OCS.

"I see an officer that's confident in their duties and able to complete tasks and make decisions under stress," said Eipperle of OCS graduates. "Just be proud of what they've learned and be a strong leader."

TAC instructor's roles and goals have changed over the years, but they are there to set

a standard that has been built over time and to lead students by their example.

The position of a TAC has changed even more since the Global War on Terror, or what is now more commonly referred to as Overseas Contingency Operations.

"There used to be hazing at OCS and a lot of attention to unnecessary things like barracks inspections," said Sewell. "Now it is developing leaders. It's tactically driven, and we no longer haze students. We put them in a stressful environment and see how they react."

OCS is starting to see a large increase in the number of combat veterans coming in to fill the ranks of second lieutenants. Almost 53 percent of the Soldiers in the current consolidated OCS program are combat veterans.

"Our TACs - or any officer candidates that have been deployed - are there to help build you up and make you a stronger Soldier," said Eining.

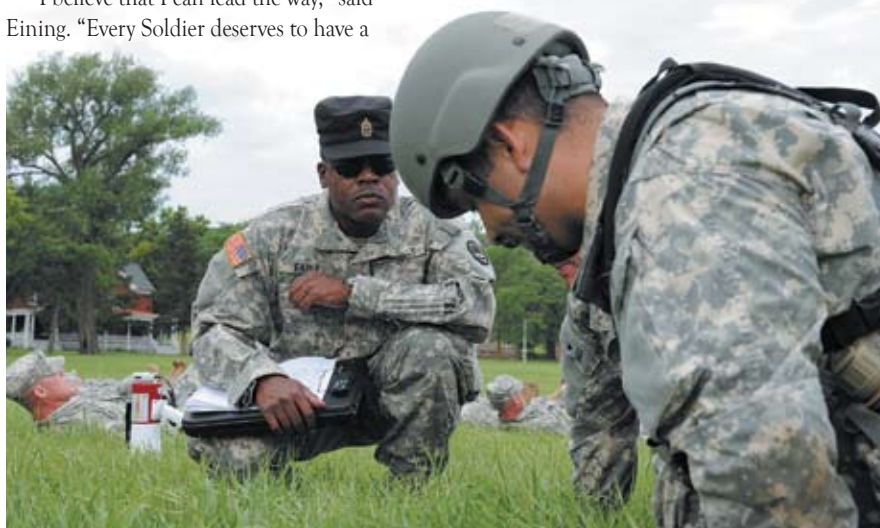
Photos this page: Teach, Assess, Counsel (TAC) Instructors drill officer candidates during the opening of Phase IB of the Officer Candidate School at the 196th Regiment, Regional Training Institute at Fort Meade on July 11. (Army photos by Cadet Kyle Wade)



At OCS there are leaders being made, but this would not be possible without the help and guidance of the TACs.

"I believe that I can lead the way," said Eining. "Every Soldier deserves to have a

strong leader above them, to mentor them, to help them, to build them up to make them stronger."



25 YEARS OF GOLDEN COYOTE

By Sgt. Theanne Tangen
Photos by Spc. Joe Bungert
429th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A look back at the beginning

For a quarter century, service members from around the world have trained in the Black Hills of South Dakota as part of a nationally recognized exercise known as Golden Coyote.

According to Brig. Gen. Theodore D. Johnson, director of the Joint Staff, South Dakota National Guard, "The staff and the Soldiers of the South Dakota National Guard have become better military decision makers due to the requirements that an exercise such as Golden Coyote demands."

About 65,000 military personnel from the National Guard, Army Reserve, Air Guard, Air Force, a Naval Fleet Hospital and numerous foreign countries have participated in the event since its beginning in 1984.

"That first year was held at Camp Ripley, Minnesota and every South Dakota National Guard unit went there for its two-week annual training," said Duke Doering, who spent 42 years in the Guard.

Doering, who lives in Rapid City, is noted for being the resident historian when it comes to the happenings of the National Guard over the past 50 years.

There were many challenges in coordinating a

training event of such a large size.

It wasn't quite practical to have all the units train together that year. "Every unit was so diverse that it was hard to combine them under one scenario," said Doering. But the next year, Golden Coyote became an engineer-oriented exercise in the Black Hills and the training became more focused. The South Dakota National Guard partnered with the National Forest Service and Custer State Park to gain additional space for training.

"It was a win-win situation," said Doering. "Engineer units could



do mission training and, in turn, the State Park, National Forest Service, and communities got new roads, timber trails, and structures built."

Some of the major projects over the past 25 years include building soccer fields in Rapid City, the golf course at Ellsworth Air Force Base, bridges along the 109-mile Mickelson Trail, crosswind runways at Wall and Sturgis, and structures at the Girl's and Boy's Scout Camps.

"I can remember working on a project in 1992, when we used helicopters to sky lift iron beams and timbers out of the Hall of Records behind Mount Rushmore," Doering added.

In recent years, the exercise developed into one that provides training for combat support and combat service support units such as transportation, medical, quartermaster, signal, chemical, public affairs, military police and aviation, while supporting the event. As more states became involved, the exercise grew in notoriety and drew attention from other countries.

According to Col. Scott Jacobson, staff director for Golden Coyote, leaders from across the nation recognize the value of leaving their state to work in a realistic training environment.

"It's an opportunity for units to mobilize from home station, set up in a different location, work with combat support units and redeploy back to their home station," he said.

Currently, the exercise involves a joint task force of 62 units totaling approximately 3,600 service members. A military police unit from Canada has paired up with the American troops to gain experience and hone their military tactics.

Other countries such as Singapore, Suriname, Germany and Great Britain have also participated or sent service members to observe Golden Coyote. This task force operates under a common wartime scenario with a mission to provide force protection, humanitarian aid and improvements of the Black Hills' infrastructure.

Jacobson added the benefit of having other countries participate in Golden Coyote affords the opportunity to learn tactics, techniques and procedures from other countries. He also stated we all learn how to work together. As allies, we fight wars together; and so as the saying goes, "you train like you fight." The exercise maintains a multi-national flavor to it, which enhances the training and educational value to everyone involved.

Guard helps build new youth hall

■ Parents of accident victims started the Hill City youth program.

By Bill Cissell
Journal Staff Writer

The deaths of two Hill City teens in 1974 brought about the city's original youth program.

the city's youth program started," Walker said. Broderson's family also joined the effort. Walker said they later established a foundation for the program and continue to support it financially.

"I believe this is the oldest continuously operating youth program in the state. I think the new facility will be a great asset to the community."



Sgt. Maj. Tad Auker, member of Joint Force Headquarters of Rapid City, remembers a time when the 155th Engineers were tasked to build a bridge on the Mickelson Trail.

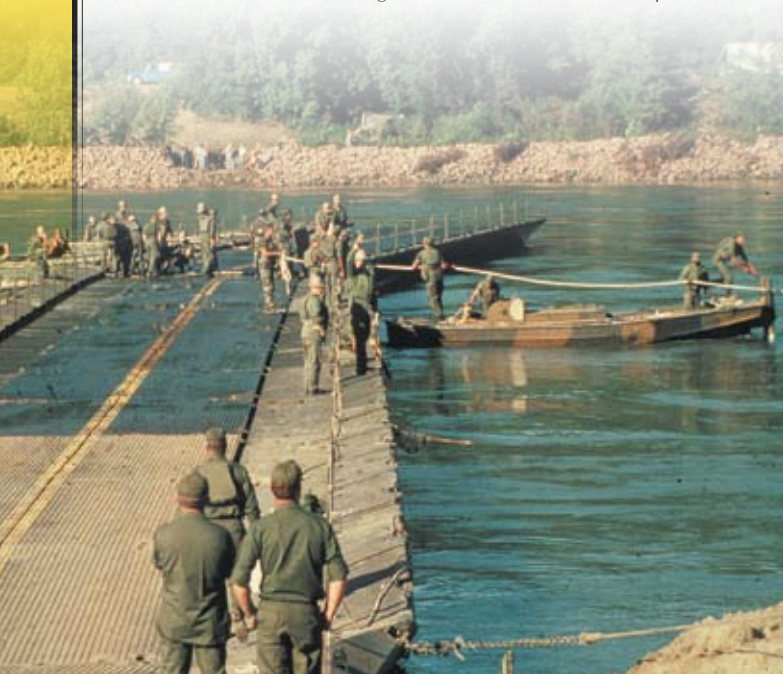
"We did a lot of planning and purchased pre-built materials for a 144-foot bridge," said Auker. The British and German officers that observed us that next morning couldn't believe that we could build such a structure in one day. We impressed them greatly."

Auker feels Golden Coyote has evolved to meet the needs of the military over the past 25 years. "We have transitioned from a strategic reserve to an operational force," said Auker.

He added, units follow a structured timeline which ensures they are taking the necessary steps to be fully capable of being mobilized. They need to have the necessary equipment to be successful for their mission, have qualified personnel and become familiar with the latest military tactics.

Hopefully, the result will be improved mission effectiveness, decreased risk of casualties and less time lost during post-mobilization training.

Future goals of the Golden Coyote exercise continue to focus on improving the training that enables units to be prepared for both homeland defense missions and Overseas Contingency Operations. The Golden Coyote exercise is one of the premier training venues for National Guard, Reserve and active duty military, providing relevant training opportunities for all participants.



TOPPED OFF: Fuelers keep vehicles moving



(Left to Right) Spc. Ryan Jorgensen operates the fuel control lever while Spc. Joe Landers fills gas cans from a 2,500-gallon Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) tanker during the 25th annual Golden Coyote exercise from 6-20 June. Jorgensen and Landers are residents of Watertown, and members of Detachment I, Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion located in Watertown.

(Army Photo by Spc. Joseph Bungert)

By Spc. Joe Bungert
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CUSTER STATE PARK AIRPORT – Petroleum specialists with Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) from Watertown and Redfield, kept vehicles full of fuel during the 25th annual Golden Coyote training exercise in the Black Hills.

“Our unit operated retail fuel points, or mobile gas stations, on the five tactical forward operating bases (FOBs) created for Golden Coyote,” said Sgt. Dennis Benthin, a Watertown native with Co. A, 139th BSB, and the noncommissioned officer in charge of the fuel point on FOB Custer State Park Airport.

Fuel for Golden Coyote was drawn from a fuel storage area on Ellsworth Air Force Base by the 593rd Transportation Company from Reno, Nev., and transported in 5,000-gallon tankers to distribution companies, like Co. A, 139th BSB. Once delivered the fuel was then transferred as needed into smaller tankers.

“We pumped fuel from one 2,500-gallon Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) tanker into our customers’ vehicles and gas cans, and had a 5,000-gallon tanker standing by,” Benthin said.

Two small tankers from Company A, 311th BSB of Lexington, Mo., also operated fuel points on each FOB, he explained.

“We have issued 1,600 gallons of fuel,” Benthin added. “This includes refueling our own vehicles during the trip from Watertown to the Black Hills.”

Spc. Ryan Jorgensen, a fuel specialist from Watertown, with Co. A, 139th BSB, and a full-time student, explained how a typical refueling operation works.

“When a vehicle pulls up for fuel, the first thing we do is ground the receiving vehicle to prevent electrical shocks,” Jorgensen said. “We then have one fueler handling the hose from the tanker to the vehicle and another operating a fuel control lever that can cut off the flow of fuel to the hose in case something happens to the hose operator.”

“We then record the gallons of fuel issued, the bumper number of the vehicle and the name of the unit receiving the fuel. The driver then signs for the fuel and drives off,” he added.

According to Spc. Joe Landers from Watertown, also a fuel specialist with Co. A, 139th BSB, unit members can refuel anything



Pfc. Jess Krantz, a Watertown native, refuels a 915 tractor-trailer. Krantz, a petroleum specialist with Detachment I, Company A, 139th Brigade Support Battalion from Watertown and Redfield, is attending annual training in the Black Hills during the 25th annual Golden Coyote exercise from 6-20 June. (Army Photo by Spc. Joseph Bungert)

the Army has from five-gallon gas cans to aircraft.

“Our tankers can pump up to 300 gallons of fuel a minute. That’s the same rate that a fire truck can pump with two people handling the hoses,” said Landers.

“We pumped around 20,000 gallons of fuel at each FOB, and over 100,000 gallons just to keep all the vehicles, generators and stoves running throughout Golden Coyote,” said Benthin.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Food services on a roll

By Staff Sgt. Stephanie P. Abdullah
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

RAPID CITY – Twelve hundred Meals Ready to Eat, a combined 2,400 breakfast and dinner meals, 80 pounds of fruit, 80 loaves of bread, 100, 20-pound bags of ice, six trucks, dozens of Soldiers, and countless hours is what it took to feed the more than 3,600 Golden Coyote training exercise participants.

Soldiers from various elements of South Dakota's 139th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) of Watertown and Redfield, worked feverishly to make this happen.

Staff Sgt. Grant Evans, who works as a general supply squad leader in Company A, 139th BSB, explained a bit of the process.

"Each forward operating base (FOB) had to send over a food request through the FOB mayor," said Evans. "Once we know what each FOB needs, 'Chief' Urban creates the menus, being certain to rotate the menus for variety. Then we print up a ticket for the request, pull and wrap the items and store properly."

Warrant Officer Jeff Urban of Co. A, 139th BSB, who works as a food service technician for the South Dakota Army National Guard said "feeding more than 3,600 personnel doesn't come without challenges."

"The biggest challenges we face are trying to get the right amount of food without having excess or shortages and making sure that I have all of the workers that I need and equipment to get the food downrange," said Urban.

This delicate balance meant getting up bright and early. During daily mission preparation, Soldiers begin loading rations into transportation vehicles in the early-morning hours. Frozen and perishable foods were loaded into refrigerated trucks and non-perishable items were loaded onto trucks. The labor continued until thousands of pounds of rations were ready for shipment and delivery to the remote forward operating bases of Golden Coyote including Railroad Buttes, Fisherman's Flats, Custer State Park Airport (CSPA) and Tee Pee – which is a half-hour's drive from the Wyoming border.

Sgt. Matthew King, Detachment 1, 740th Transportation of Aberdeen, is a truck driver who volunteered for the ration delivery mission when his original mission was scaled back.



A Soldier guides a forklift driver toward refrigeration containers to store food rations for the field dining facility June 8 at Custer State Park Airport forward operating base during the 25th anniversary of the Golden Coyote training exercise. (Army photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)

"I didn't even know what I was volunteering for at first. But, I was very happy to find out that we'd be running this (ration delivery) mission every other day," said King. "It allows me to get a lot of driving time and give some driver's training to some junior Soldiers."

King even got time during his ration deliveries to find alternate training opportunities.

"It had been great practice going into the FOBs and practicing gate security procedures with the challenge and password," he said.

King's ration convoy traveled to three FOBs and covered hundreds of miles in about eight hours. Each stop required the assistance of many Soldiers to get the vehicles unloaded and the rations stored. Additionally, rain in the area caused the drop-off locations to be muddy havens.

"We knew it would be wet out there," said King. "Getting around the FOBs in the mud

was a challenge, but we didn't get stuck."

Even in the muddiest location, which was CSPA, Soldiers came together and worked as a team and got the job done. Some Soldiers wore black rubber boots, others had on full wet-weather gear, others worked feverishly in wet and muddy Army Combat Uniforms with thick globs of muck on the bottom of their boots.

According to Urban, the state food service section supplied a similar number of meals as they supplied for the Golden Coyote training exercise in 2008: 45,936 Meals Ready to Eat, 64,600 dinner and breakfast meals and thousands of pounds of ice.

Urban admits that it's a lot of work to receive, store, and deliver more than 100,000 meals, but said "It's worth it. The most rewarding part of my job is that the Soldiers get fed."

Sgt. Matt King of Brookings, member of Detachment 1, of the 740th Transportation Company, Aberdeen, delivers food rations to Staff Sgt. James Rennicker of Twinsbury, Ohio, member of 256th Combat Support Hospital, Uhrichsville, Ohio, during the 25th anniversary of the Golden Coyote training exercise June 8 at the Railroad Buttes forward operating base. (Army photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)

NO BEACH OUT OF REACH



Pfc. Randy Martin, of McLaughlin, and Spc. Cody Allen, of Herreid, members of Detachment 2, 200th Engineer Company of Mobridge, raise the ramp on the improved ribbon bridge to transport military vehicles across the Missouri River on June 6 during the 25th anniversary of the Golden Coyote training exercise.
(Army photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)

By Staff Sgt. Carlos J. Lazo and Sgt. Mike Getten
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment/106th Public Affairs Detachment

CHAMBERLAIN – Overcoming natural obstacles has always been a challenge for military forces. Similarly, crossing the Missouri River is one such hurdle many Golden Coyote training exercise participants faced June 6 and 7 near Chamberlain.

The 2,540 mile-long Missouri River, which runs through central South Dakota, is an obstacle the Soldiers of the 200th Engineer Company of Chamberlain, Pierre and Mobridge have become familiar with.

The unit has been training for years on how to complete a bridge crossing as part of the Golden Coyote training exercise.

“We were tasked to maneuver units across a water obstacle,” said 1st Lt. James R. Forbes, executive officer, 200th Eng. Co. “Our goal is to safely get [units] across.”

While the well-being of Soldiers is a priority for 200th troops, speed and efficiency are also highly valued.

“We give them a good safety briefing and get them across as quickly as possible so these commanders can drive on and go do what they need to do,” said Forbes.

By using improved ribbon bridge rafts controlled by combat support boats, the unit’s

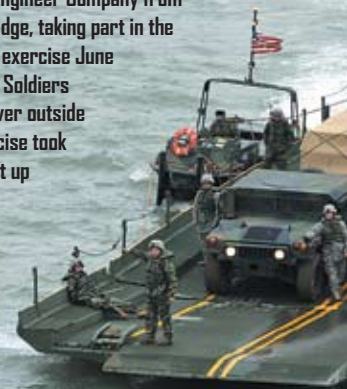
engineers and bridge crew members safely transported 290 vehicles.

“After an hour of operation, the unit had transported 45 vehicles and 96 personnel across the river using five rafts,” said Forbes. “Each raft used for the mission consisted of six individual pieces, or bays, commonly referred to as a six-float. Up to seven bays can be added together to make a raft with a maximum weight capacity of 140 tons,” said Forbes.

The boats control and propel across the river on the floating platforms from opposite sides of the rafts in pairs. The five floats and two ends of the ribbon bridge that create the raft can be a challenging undertaking.

“Everyone does everything to cross-train,” said Sgt. Kris Mullen, boat driver and Rapid City native from Detachment 2, 200th Eng. Co. of Mobridge. “Even if it’s cold it’s fun. This is something the 200th looks forward to.

A raft comprising four floats and two ends of a system called a ribbon bridge, is put to work by Soldiers of the 200th Engineer Company from Chamberlain and Mobridge, taking part in the Golden Coyote training exercise June 6 to ferry vehicles and Soldiers across the Missouri River outside Chamberlain. The exercise took the Eng. Co. a day to set up and two days to ferry nearly 200 vehicles across the river, then an additional day to retrieve their equipment from the water.
(Army photo by Sgt. Mike Getten)



The 200th Engineer Company of Chamberlain, Pierre and Mobridge, secure their boats to ribbon bridges on the Missouri River in Chamberlain near the Interstate 90 bridge.
(Army photo by Sgt. Luis Delgadilla)



Movement across the Missouri River takes the visiting units one step closer to the completion of their Golden Coyote missions.

On the beachhead, a noncommissioned officer designated as beach master guides the vehicles into position prior to loading, before the raft commander takes over vehicle loading.

Many units moving across the waterway come from all over the country.

"A lot of them came from the east; Minnesota, Iowa, and eastern South Dakota," said Sgt 1st Class Darrell K. Beck, platoon sergeant, 200th Eng. Co. of Pierre.

This training also translates very well into the company's mission in wartime, said Beck.

"We had this very similar mission in Iraq," said Beck. "You learn how to deal with a lot of military convoys."

According to Beck, the unit was deployed in 2003 and helped set up a bridge north of Baghdad, near the city of Balad.

Along with preparation for wartime, Forbes also sees this operation as a good way to train new personnel in the unit, especially young Soldiers.

"My first drill as an officer was with this unit," said Forbes. "It was their first drill after



deployment...and after an hour, we had still not built a six-float. We had brand new boat operators, the build crew was new...you had all those factors in there."

Now they take about 12 minutes to complete setting one up.

"That just comes from everybody knowing their job and working together," said Forbes. "It's one of the most enjoyable aspects of being in a leadership position - watching the growth of a unit - and getting more proficient."

Engineers train on new bridge system

By Spc. Joe Bungert
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Sgt. Martin Konechne, from Kimbal, S.D., a bridge crew member with Detachment 1, 200th Engineer Company in Chamberlain, S.D., operates a crane used to lift sections of a heavy dry span bridge onto a bridge launch vehicle, during the 25th annual Golden Coyote training exercise.
(Army photo by Spc. Joseph Bungert)

CUSTER STATE PARK AIRPORT - Following on the heels of rafting National Guard Soldiers across the Missouri River, the 200th Engineer Company, from Pierre with Detachment 1 in Chamberlain and Detachment 2 in Mobridge, assembled a pair of heavy dry span bridges for the second time during the 25th annual Golden Coyote training exercise in the Black Hills of South Dakota, 6-20 June.

Equipped with two types of bridges, the improved ribbon bridge and the dry span bridge, the 200th is classified as a multi-role bridge company capable of bridging both rivers and dry land gaps like gullies or dry riverbeds.

"The purpose of the dry span bridge is to enable any military or civilian traffic to cross a dry land gap, meaning no water beneath it," said Sgt. 1st Class Dave Trautman Jr., a bridge crew noncommissioned officer and combat veteran with Detachment 1, 200th Engineer Company.

The dry span bridge can extend 40 meters, or it can be divided into two sections of 20 meters each. The unit has four of these bridges that can be split to make eight.

To assemble the dry span bridge, a series of steel beams are pieced together that will reach across the gap to be traversed. Once the beam is in place, a section of the bridge is lifted onto a launch vehicle, and the sections are tethered to the spanning beam and slid forward.

This process continues until the bridge reaches the end of the beam across the gap. The assembled bridge is then lowered to the ground and ramps are attached each to end. With the bridge in place, vehicles weighing up to 110 tons can safely cross.

"With a crew of only eight Soldiers, this is a hard bridge to build," said Trautman. "It takes a great deal of teamwork. There are so many things that have to happen in the right sequence and so many steps to follow. If you skip one you can severely damage the equipment."

This bridge is so new to the military and there are no standards as to how long it should take to assemble the bridge. The 200th is a seasoned group of professionals and their vast experience here at home and in combat have proven they will figure it out.

"We have new crews on the bridge teams that haven't worked together before so we planned on six hours to complete a build, and it's only taking three," said Trautman. "That shows teamwork and knowing your job allows the crews to accomplish great things. I am proud of everyone here and proud to say I am a member of the 200th."



Members of Detachment 1, 200th Engineer Company in Chamberlain, assemble a heavy dry span bridge.
(Army photo by Spc. Joseph Bungert)

Timber haul benefits community, forest

By Sgt. Mike Getten
106th Public Affairs Detachment



A hydraulic excavator from the 842nd Engineer Company of Spearfish loads timber onto a flatbed trailer from 1742nd Transportation Company of Sioux Falls, in Custer State Park during the Golden Coyote exercise in June. (Army photo by Sgt. Mike Getten)

PINE RIDGE — Service members from all over the country helped to transport more than 200 truckloads of timber to the Oglala Sioux and Crow Creek Reservations in South Dakota as part of the Golden Coyote training exercise. The residents of Pine Ridge Reservation will use the timber for firewood for heating and ceremonial purposes.

The mission coordinator, Maj. Jade Beehler of the 152nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion of Pierre, led a diverse group of Soldiers to accomplish the mission. Soldiers from three engineering companies from South Dakota joined those from 152nd CSSB, and four transportation companies from South Dakota, Iowa and New Mexico.

The National Forest Service and Custer State Park cut and piled the timber and then identified individual piles for Golden Coyote to transport to the drop sites.

Engineering assets were used to load the timber onto the flatbed trucks of the transportation companies. Hydraulic excavators lifted the timber to load it onto the trailers, and then the chain saw crews trimmed the timber to eliminate branches protruding from the load. The drivers secured the load and hauled it to the drop sites where forklift operators pushed the load off the flatbed trailer.

"We hauled timber out of the Black Hills from two locations to 14 drop sites within the Oglala Sioux Reservation," Beehler said. "There were four drop sites identified on the Crow

Spc. Even Wempe of Detachment 1, 200th Engineer Company, Pierre, trims a load of timber destined for Pine Ridge, using a chain saw. Wempe is taking part in the timber haul mission while attending the Golden Coyote training exercise 2009. (Army photo by Sgt. Mike Getten)



Creek Reservation where we dropped timber on our return trip to home station.

The mission was first suggested as a possible training exercise in October 2006, when the U.S. Forest Service personnel met with Lt. Col. Dan Iverson, the exercise coordinator. They discussed the National Guard hauling away the thinning piles produced by implementing their conservation program to thin the forest, in an effort to avoid the spread of major forest fires. They also suggested moving the timber to the reservation where it could be best consumed.

In that first year, the mission hauled more than 90 loads and has steadily grown since.

"Last year my group did the mission, and we

exceeded what had been done the year before, hauling 130 loads."

Beehler's goal for this year was 210 loads and felt confident they would meet it.

The familiarity of the mission and Golden Coyote's heavy equipment assets have contributed to the success of the task.

"Last year we had one day when we couldn't haul due to climate conditions. This year we were a little proactive and picked a couple of sites just in case the weather got bad, and it did, so we adjusted," Beehler said.

The units assisting with the haul are primarily accustomed to highway driving and rarely have the opportunity to get the vehicles off the pavement.



A truck from the 1742nd Transportation Company of Sioux Falls, passes through Hot Springs transporting timber to Pine Ridge. (Army photo by Sgt. Mike Getten)

"We have to be cautious and have certain conditions in order to drive the trucks on the gravel and dirt roads in Custer State Park," Beehler said. "We want to make sure we do this safely. There have been neither injuries nor major accidents; everyone is driving as safely as possible; that's the way we like to keep it."

The drivers received training in tie-down and strapping due to the unusual load. They also got some experience driving in adverse weather conditions because of the rain, and they drove off road on some muddy surfaces.

"The training is outstanding," said Sgt. 1st Class Chadwick Schmitz, from Pierre, the 152nd's readiness noncommissioned officer. "The forklift operators did a nonstandard task of pushing the timber off. There was a lot of good recovery training. We've had a lot of these outfits stuck in the mud and have had to pull them out. So operators received some good training on all aspects."

The timber haul benefits all agencies and people involved by clearing away the timber, providing training and finally providing firewood to those who can use it.

"Last year we were out there and a couple of people came up to thank us," Beehler said. "One time in particular that stands out is when a young lady came up and said her grandmother had used the wood during the previous winter to keep her warm and she appreciated it. It has been a positive reaction from the tribe members and the people of the community."

Beehler remains passionate about the exercise and the overall benefits to everyone involved because of the rewards the timber haul mission brings.

"I want to thank the people involved from the tribe for using the wood, the National Forest Service and Custer State Park because they have allowed us to use their facilities and provided the timber," Beehler said. "It allows the opportunity for the intense training and the Soldiers feel good about what they are doing. We all gain from this mission."

Engineers tackle Copper Mountain quarry

By Sgt. Carlos J. Lazo
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Det.

BLACK HILLS – Even during mandatory training, the National Guard still finds time to help the community. Of course, it's hard to say "no" when helping provides the opportunity to blow stuff up.

That's exactly what Guardsmen from Headquarters Support Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion of Huron, had the opportunity to do June 11 during the Golden Coyote training exercise.

Utilizing 1,250 pounds of explosives, engineers of the 153rd were tasked with taking an area of Copper Mountain quarry with a sheer-face cliff and turning it into a softer angle.

The U.S. Forest Service requests help from the South Dakota Army National Guard to keep the quarry workers safe from falling rocks. An added bonus for the city is that the ground rock taken from the cliff is used on area roads.

"We tried to help the Forest Service out," said Sgt. 1st Class Chris D. Schimke, assistant operations noncommissioned officer, HSC, 153rd. "It gives our Soldiers the opportunity to do some demolition training during Golden Coyote."

Utilizing shape and cratering charges, 153rd Soldiers like Staff Sgt. Robert R. Cole, HSC, 153rd, placed five 40-pound shape charges at the top of the cliff, several feet from the edge.

"When that blasting cap goes off, it will hit that C4 inside the charge and send a molten-hot ball of metal into the ground and create a hole," said Spc. Shawn M. Baye, combat engineer, HSC, 153rd.

Those holes, created by the 40-pound shape charges, were used to bury crater charges into the ground. This last explosive, primed with one-and-a-half pounds of C4, is the main ground mover, removing the face of the cliff and creating a softer slope.

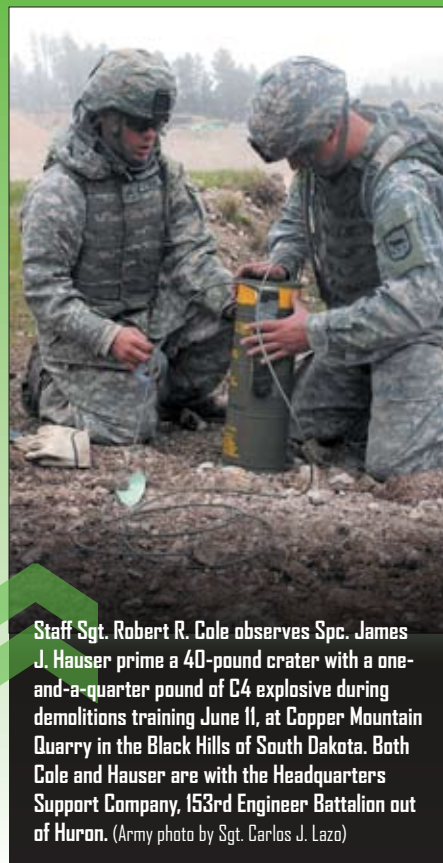
No more than 250 pounds at a time were used during the training, said Schimke. This process was repeated several times during the day in order to move all the dirt and provide every Soldier the opportunity to practice.

"The main intent is to sustain skills that Soldiers learned," said Schimke. "And make sure it stays fresh in their minds."

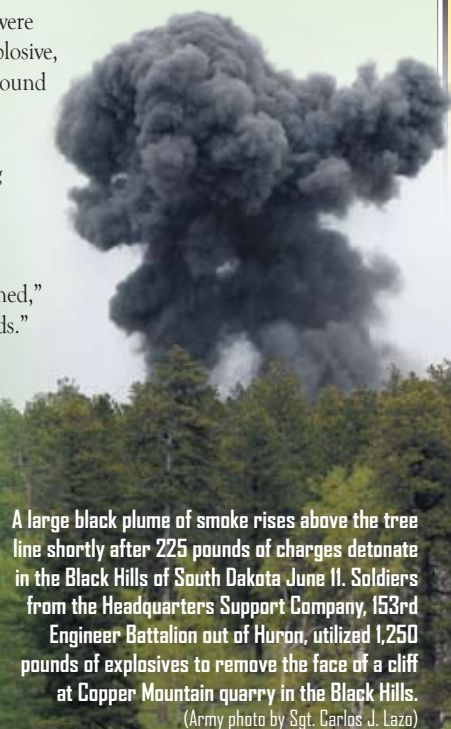
At all times, safety dictated the training pace, and was key in its successful completion.

After every explosion, Schimke and some of his NCOs inspected the detonation site for any unexploded ordnance. This was done prior to the other Soldiers arriving and placing the charges for the next detonation.

At the end of the day, Soldiers of the 153rd were able to conduct a real-world mission, use their job skills, and the Forest Service received the help they needed.



Staff Sgt. Robert R. Cole observes Spc. James J. Hauser prime a 40-pound crater with a one-and-a-quarter pound of C4 explosive during demolitions training June 11, at Copper Mountain Quarry in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Both Cole and Hauser are with the Headquarters Support Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion out of Huron. (Army photo by Sgt. Carlos J. Lazo)



A large black plume of smoke rises above the tree line shortly after 225 pounds of charges detonate in the Black Hills of South Dakota June 11. Soldiers from the Headquarters Support Company, 153rd Engineer Battalion out of Huron, utilized 1,250 pounds of explosives to remove the face of a cliff at Copper Mountain quarry in the Black Hills. (Army photo by Sgt. Carlos J. Lazo)

2009 SIOUX FALLS AIRSHOW: Bringing it all together

By Staff Sgt. Miranda Skiles
114th Fighter Wing

The 2009 Sioux Falls Airshow went off without a hitch. This did not happen by accident or stroke of luck. Thousands of hours of planning over the last year went into making the event one of the best airshows yet.

One key player in the planning of this show was Maj. Eric Gerber, 175th Fighter Squadron operations officer. His additional role as the military project officer made him the point man for getting the ball rolling. His main focus was the military side of the show. He worked side by side with the airshow committee to coordinate the event down to the last detail.

The first stage in planning the airshow started about a year ago. The civilian airshow committee members requested support letters from Congressmen and State Representatives through the contacts they have at the state capital and in Washington, D.C. These letters are included in the package for the Department of Defense. The committee must submit all paperwork to the DoD in July to request big name acts like the Navy Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Team.

Over the next few months, the committee receives a tentative schedule of what show locations will get which performers. This allows them to start doing a little planning, but they don't get the official commitment from the performer until late in the year.

In December, Gerber attended an airshow conference in Las Vegas to recruit other acts to perform at the Sioux Falls Airshow. This is where he initially made contact with the F-22 team. They have a lot fewer performances on their schedule than most demonstration teams, so Sioux Falls got lucky to get them here.

Several members of the F-22 crew are from the Midwest region and they were eager to perform in Sioux Falls so they could be closer to home. All the big Air Force bases get F-22 shows, but they specifically wanted to come here.

Gerber said he got the word that Sioux Falls had probably secured the Blue Angels for the show while he was on deployment in the desert, but the announcement wasn't made official until he got back to South Dakota.

Once the Blue Angels were committed to the Sioux Falls Airshow, the date was set and the committee then started contract negotiations on hotel rooms, vehicles, and all other necessary arrangements.

Many South Dakota Air National Guard members took on extra duties to make the show a success. Senior Master Sgt. Scott Schaffer and Master Sgt. Kurt Lunstra worked together with the committee to find a block of rooms for all the performers. Chief Master Sgt. Mike Laufman made vehicle reservations. Capt. Travis Boltjes and 1st Lt. Dell Schledewitz made cold calls for static displays. In previous years



An F-22 Raptor demonstrates its capabilities during the 2009 Sioux Falls Airshow. (Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton Young)

"I came from over 12 hours away to see something I have never seen before and was amazed."

- Darron, Oklahoma City



Maj. John Klatt of the Minnesota Air National Guard performs stunts in a Staudacher S-3000 during the 2009 Sioux Falls Airshow. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton Young)

it was much easier to line up displays for the show, but due to budget constraints this year, nobody wanted to spend money to go to airshows.

"It's nice being the military project officer here because of the support we have on this base," said Gerber. "As long as you can get some organization going and get the basic plan set, everyone else will help out. It was so neat to see how people want to work."

Gerber had to balance his normal work schedule and the airshow planning duties. During the UCI, he put the airshow on hold except for completing FAA paperwork. While he was still flying and instructing, he requested the minimum number of sorties possible to allow time to get paperwork done and still maintain proficiency.

"I don't know how the civilian guys on the committee got their work done. They worked on the airshow two to three days per work week and still had to keep up with their normal day-to-day jobs," said Gerber.

"Our unit did a lot of nice things for the performers that a lot of other shows wouldn't," said Gerber. For example, the electric shop gave their workspace to the F-22 team so they could have an area to themselves. The Raptor team said they would love to come back to Sioux Falls because they received better treatment here than they have at any other show.

Many of the performers made similar comments about the great treatment here in South Dakota.

"The people you meet and work with makes it definitely well worth it. Working with everyone, civilian and military, was a really neat experience. A lot of hard work goes in to it."

**- Maj. Eric Gerber
175th FS Operations Officer**

"Just like the South Dakota Air National Guard always does, a lot of people pull together and impress people so they want to participate again," said Gerber.

So would he want to head up the next airshow? Probably not. "It got to be very time consuming, I know my wife is happy it is done," he jokes. "Once per career is enough. But the people you meet and work with makes it definitely well worth it. Working with everyone, civilian and military, was a really neat experience. A lot of hard work goes into it. Whatever the task, I could hand it off and it was done in a day or two."

For Gerber the highlight of the whole process was seeing it all come together through the execution phase because everyone involved was working as hard as possible. "Not one bad comment has come back from everybody we've talked to, both performers and spectators," says Gerber. "This was one of the best airshows because hundreds of people came together to make it work. It's pretty neat."

To sum up the experience Gerber says, "We are one big happy team. But a team that is happy it's done!"

Every member of the South Dakota Air National Guard and the airshow committee deserves a huge thank you. The success of this event is a reflection of our great unit and the community we call home.

When the Sioux Falls Airshow rolls around again, gather your family and friends, relax and enjoy the show. But remember all the hours of planning put in to an event of this size. What another wonderful reminder that the South Dakota Air National Guard can successfully complete any task thrown its way, no matter how huge the feat.



F-18s from the Navy's Blue Angels demonstration team fly in formation at Joe Foss Field in Sioux Falls, July 22 for the Sioux Falls Airshow July 25 and 26. (Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton Young)



Steve Falon pilots a Pitts Special during the 2009 Sioux Falls Airshow. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton Young)



An F-18 Blue Angel taxis on the runway as an F-22 Raptor flies low over Joe Foss Field during the 2009 Sioux Falls Airshow. (Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton Young)

Security Forces Squadron: We don't work alone

By Capt. Joe Hardin
114th Fighter Wing Security Forces

Security augmentee, Chief Master Sgt. Jeff Portice works with a bus driver in the VIP parking lot to ensure safety and easy flow of traffic. (Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland)



SIoux FALLS - Over 100,000 airshow patrons, seven satellite parking areas, 70 buses, numerous military and civilian aircraft (not to mention the Air Force's premiere fighter) vendors, military personnel, lost children...the list goes on.

The 114th Fighter Wing commander, Russ Walz, tasked over 600 augmentees and Security Forces members to ensure the safety and security of all personnel and property both on and off the base for two days. The additional force protection measures provided by the Security Forces augmentees could not be done by Security Forces alone. We have an outstanding squadron of well-trained people, with great experience in the military and in civilian law enforcement, but the bottom line is with an event as big as the 2009 Sioux Falls Airshow, we need help to accomplish the security mission.

The Sioux Falls Police Department, South Dakota Highway Patrol, Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office, as well as numerous federal law enforcement agencies have responsibilities throughout many areas of the airshow and all agencies had a part in planning and executing security operations during the two-day event. Local law enforcement has a big job to keep everything outside the base safe as well as having a presence on the base with all of the fans, but the greatest source of security comes from the 114th Fighter Wing.

The base was also supported by the Navy Reserve, Army National Guard and Civil Air Patrol in various roles on and off base.

"This was a joint operation, the coordination of personnel is not a small job, but the personnel who came together for the Sioux Falls Airshow should be proud of the job they did to keep everyone safe," said Chief Master Sgt. Ron Meland, 114th Security Forces manager.

One group of trained professionals that does not make the headlines for events such as the airshow is the ready augmentees, or RAT team. This team, commanded by Capt. Kevin Miller from the finance office,



Security augmentees, Staff Sgt. Matthew Hendrickson, 114th MXS and Staff Sgt. Chris Schuette, 114th CF assist drivers in finding handicap parking. (Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Nancy Ausland)

is trained at a higher level than base personnel in the area of security, weapons, use of force and many other areas to always be ready to supplement the Security Forces Squadron.

"I am always looking for additional members to add to the great Airmen we already have on the team," said Capt. Miller.

Miller also added that the missions for the RAT team have also included security for presidential visits and counterdrug operations.

The augmentees who supported our Security Forces Squadron and the entire 114th Fighter Wing should be proud of a job well done, as the patrons said it best as they walked out the gate.

"The security, safety and traffic control was outstanding. I hope that Sioux Falls will yet again put on another airshow. Everyone did a spectacular job."

IRT program benefits communities, Soldiers

Story and photos by Abby Buehler
Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY – At first glance, the Hammerquist Baseball Field in Rapid City's Robbinsdale Park looks forgotten. The knee-high weeds have taken over the majority of the complex, making it hard to discern where the infield begins and ends. However, thanks to the 842nd Engineer Company of Spearfish, Belle Fourche and Sturgis, there seems to be hope for the ailing ball field.

The 842nd is part of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Innovative Readiness Training program (IRT), and is currently working on resurfacing Hammerquist Field.

According to 1st Lt. Jared Bloomgren, community projects manager for the IRT, although the IRT projects being completed at this time are predominantly from the 842nd, there are numerous other units who participate in the program.

"The goal of the IRT program is to better the community through volunteer National Guard work," said Officer Candidate Paul Rodriguez, project supervisor. "It's really a win-win for the community and the National Guard."

During this past year, the IRT has completed various projects throughout South Dakota, from reclamation of land used during the Golden Coyote training exercise in Custer State Park and the Black Hills National Forest, to working with the school district in Faith, removing waste and debris from an old school that was torn down.

The IRT is also currently working on building a baseball field in Custer, for its juvenile detention center.

"It's more than just West River," said Rodriguez. "We've also done projects in Yankton."

One member of the 842nd, Spc. Josh Whitford, a fuel supply specialist, just began working with the IRT a month ago, and has already seen the benefits they bring to the community.

"It's important to help out the community, to get the projects done that would otherwise probably take a little longer," said Whitford.

Whitford added that his favorite part of helping the community was to see the effect it had on people after the project was done.

Brian Chleborad, president of the Black Hills Baseball Association, worked with 1st Sgt. Mike Shay, program manager for the IRT, to get the National Guard interested in this project.

"The guys that have been working on the project are great folks," said Chleborad. "They're willing to do whatever."

The materials for the project were provided by the baseball association, while all the equipment and labor is through the National Guard.

"It will provide an opportunity for 150 kids to play baseball," said Chleborad. "There's no way we could have done this project without the Guard."

Soldiers from the 842nd Engineer Company of Spearfish, Belle Fourche and Sturgis, get their hands dirty as they work to clear the remains of grass and weeds from the Hammerquist Baseball Field at Rapid City's Robbinsdale Park on Aug. 4. The resurfacing of the field is one of the many projects the Innovative Readiness Training program from the South Dakota Army National Guard is conducting this summer



Soldiers from the 842nd Engineer Company of Spearfish, Belle Fourche and Sturgis, use a loader and 20-ton dump truck to clear grass and weeds from the Hammerquist Baseball Field at Rapid City's Robbinsdale Park on Aug. 4.

Chleborad added that this project will open up more benefits, such as being able to schedule more games and allow teams from outside of Rapid City to come play at Hammerquist Field.

The community is not the only one benefitting from this work. Soldiers in the IRT receive hands-on training and experience by working on these projects.

The 842nd is especially suited for the IRT program, specializing in horizontal engineering operations, which includes repairing and constructing roads and ground lines of communications, along with developing airfields and limited clearing operations.

The 842nd is equipped with heavy machinery such as bulldozers, scrapers, cranes, loaders and 20-ton dump trucks.

"It's giving the Soldiers operating time and the opportunity to train on other types of jobs," said Rodriguez.

Rodriguez went on to tell about how one Soldier had no prior experience in this type of work or equipment, but through IRT and training through the National Guard, was able to get a job on the civilian side in this field.

"It's getting a lot of training for a lot of people who otherwise wouldn't have training on this equipment," said Whitford. "People can learn things they normally wouldn't learn in their unit."

Whether members of the IRT have been helping with projects for one month or five years, they see all the benefits. And through the various projects that have been done, Rodriguez and Whitford can see the strong relationship built between the community and the National Guard.

"The community tries to support our armed forces," said Chleborad. "I think the community does a good job of that."

730th ASMC

Building relations with communities through service

By 1st Lt. Aaron Gatzke
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The 730th Area Support Medical Company, Vermillion, demonstrated the true meaning of community service during their annual training, June 8-16, by providing a wide range of services to the Lower Brule and Fort Thompson communities.

The Soldiers provided medical care, partnering with Lower Brule Health Care Center (LBHCC) and Fort Thompson Indian Health Service Clinic (FTIHSC). They also helped perform animal vaccinations, lent a hand with repairs to the temporary staff housing and even mowed the lawn.

"It's all about South Dakotans helping South Dakotans," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Rath of Vermillion, noncommissioned officer in charge for the exercise at FTIHSC.

At the LBHCC, medical Soldiers worked a variety of jobs: X-ray technician, dental technician, nursing, physician assistants, as well as doing blood draws and immunizations. The Soldiers helped the clinic staff catch up on tasks that had been stacking up.

"The 730th has been helping the LBHCC catch up on immunizations," said LaDean Morford, director of public health nursing at the clinic. "In Public Health alone we [730th and Public Health] have given 143 shots and anticipate 250 to 300 before we are done".

Soldiers also worked alongside full-time staff at the FTIHSC and the joint Public Health Services staff assigned there.

The 730th ASMC displayed professionalism, and the willingness to take the time to listen to their patients, according to Commander Bernie Long, a Naval officer and physical therapist by trade. As chief executive officer of the clinic, he is satisfied with the influence they have had on the community. Long said he recognizes the growing relationship between the Native American residents and the Soldiers.

"Historically Native Americans have shown a tremendous willingness to serve," said Long. As

a member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Long sees the humanitarian efforts as a way to encourage more Native Americans towards military service.

Long continued, "The more our Native youth sees Soldiers involved in their well-being and investing in their community - there are some great recruiting opportunities there."

According to 1st Sgt. Lee Severin of the 730th ASMC, maintaining mission-critical skills is another benefit of the medical readiness training exercise. "This is essentially the same mission we did in Iraq," he said. Severin is hoping to build a strong relationship with the community.

Capt. David Axtman of Sioux Falls, member of the 730th Area Support Medical Company, distracts 18-month-old Marley Sunshine of Fort Thompson, with his identification badge to take her vital signs during their annual training June 15 at the Fort Thompson Indian Health Service Center.

(Army photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)



According to Severin, the locals appreciate how the Soldiers showed respect to the 92-year-old eldest member of the tribe, as well as their youngest members, taking the time to listen. The unit also designated two medics to ride along and assist the ambulance in Lower Brule, responding to two motor vehicle incidents on their first night of duty.

"I feel we have reached out to the community. When we came in with our military vehicles this morning, there wasn't a person who didn't wave to us. They know why we are here," said Severin.

"I hope this is the beginning of a long working relationship with this unit. They have made a difference not only to the staff but also the patients. We would welcome them back anytime - they're awesome," said Morford.



Spc. Cynthia Holmquest of Brookings, member of the 730th Area Support Medical Company, gets down to eye level to talk to a three-year-old girl from Lower Brule, about getting her blood drawn during their annual training June 15 at the Lower Brule Health Care Center.

(Army photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)



Spc. Katie Ahern of Ruthven, Iowa, and Sgt. Bjarne Aanning of Yankton, both members of the 730th Area Support Medical Company, administer medication to 13-year-old Kalsey Frenier of Lower Brule, during their annual training June 15 at the Lower Brule Health Care Center.

(Army photo by Sgt. Theanne Tangen)

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ARMY RESERVIST BLOOMS IN NATIONAL GUARD

By Abby Buehler
Public Affairs Office



Sgt. Donna Bloom, administration specialist for Joint Force Headquarters, South Dakota Army National Guard. (Army photo by 1st Sgt. Don Matthews)

When you first walk into Sgt. Donna Bloom's office, there is something besides her warm smile that is brought to attention. It is all the red, white, and blue paraphernalia that is adorned on the walls and desk, and after talking with Donna, you realize how deep her patriotism runs.

Sgt. Bloom has been a noncommissioned officer with the South Dakota Army National Guard for three years, and affiliated with the military for a total of 15 years.

As a member of the Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City, Bloom serves as an administrative specialist. Bloom also works as a full-time technician for the SDARNG's Human Resource Office on Camp Rapid.

"My favorite part of my job is staying busy, being useful, contributing," said Bloom. "The people I've known in the National Guard for the last three years are just real friendly."

"Why I joined the National Guard – it's not a real simple story," added Bloom.

Bloom's career in the military began as a "military brat." She was born in Montgomery, Ala., and moved around every four years until she joined the Navy when she was 18 and fresh out of high school.

Bloom's family history in the military is what urged her to join. Bloom's father retired as a Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force and Bloom's younger brother was also in the Navy for 15 years.

After two years in the Navy, Bloom got married and started a family in Wisconsin. She married Rich Bloom and now has seven kids and 10 grandchildren.

For 19 years, Bloom concentrated on being a wife and mother and took a break from the military until a recruiter for the Army came to talk to her son.

"Instead of enlisting him, he got me back in," said Bloom with a laugh.

After joining the Army Reserve, Bloom deployed twice with the 530th Military Police Battalion of Omaha, Neb., once to Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo in 1999 and to Iraq in 2003 for one-half month, 6 months at Camp Bucca and 6 months at Camp Ashrah.

When Bloom received an alert order for deployment to Iraq in 2002, she and her family moved to South Dakota to be close to her husband's family. After Bloom came back from deployment, she and her husband remained and currently reside in New Underwood.

After deploying with the Reserves, Bloom transferred to the SDARNG to save herself the long drive to Nebraska every month. Thanks to 1st Sgt. George Hall, the SDARNG can call Bloom one of their own.

"He's the one who really started me thinking about the National Guard," said Bloom. "The 1st Sgt. had time for his Soldiers and got people involved."

According to Bloom, Hall got her involved in volunteering in all kinds of stuff. Bloom's community involvement lies with the National Guard. She works with veteran's affairs and participates in veterans parades. She

also works with the United Way on the Combined Federal Campaign and sets up their annual chili feed fundraiser.

Bloom is also honored to be a part of the color guard team for JFHQ and also to be a part of the Naturalization Ceremony for new U.S. citizens.

Another person in the National Guard that has had a large influence on Bloom is Maj. Deborah Bartunek, deputy for the Human Resource Office.

"I have the utmost respect for her," said Bloom. "She's very knowledgeable. I never hear her stumble along, she knows everything."

Sgt. 1st Class Mark Scharn, training NCO for JFHQ, works with Bloom and has known her for about six years.

Scharn couldn't say enough about what a pleasant person Bloom is to be around. He said that Bloom's strongest characteristic is her work ethic, and in a word, described her as "organized."

"I never second guess her," said Scharn. "Everything is always done, and it's done before I even think it needs to be done."

When talking to Bloom, she makes it clear that she wants to be useful and helpful, no matter the situation.

"My aspirations have always been to be an asset no matter where I am," added Bloom. "I'm here to learn, I like variety in a job."

"As an NCO, you're really responsible for every Soldier around you," said Bloom. "I just want to contribute to the younger Soldiers, male and female."

Bloom said one thing she tries to pass along to the younger Soldiers is the importance of staying physically fit. Bloom, who recently turned 55, still runs the two miles for the annual physical fitness test.

Bloom also tries to help Soldiers think about their future and the goals they want to accomplish.

"Integrity," said Bloom of what she hopes to pass on to other Soldiers. "Loyalty to your organization and the people you work with."

"She sets a standard by doing, not telling," said Scharn. "Donna is a fine example of women in the Army. She is someone that other women could emulate and do very well."

Besides helping other Soldiers in the National Guard, Bloom has seen how the National Guard has helped her.

"The South Dakota National Guard has rebuilt my confidence in myself," said Bloom. "When you're deployed you go through a lot of different changes, and question the decisions you've made. But being back with them (National Guard), they've really made me a lot stronger, I feel like I belong to a family."

And family is one thing that Bloom recognizes.

"Family can make or break a Soldier," said Bloom. "You need the support of your family."

Bloom went on to say that throughout her deployments and time with the Army Reserve and National Guard, her family has taken a lot of pride in her service.

"He has never wavered not once in his loyalty and support of me being in the military," said Bloom of her husband Rich. "I believe it was harder emotionally on him then it was on me on the two deployments I was on. We spent many birthdays and anniversaries apart and the love and respect we have for each other has only grown stronger."

Bloom also commented on the support that she sees from the community.

"The most memorable thing is the number of people who come up to you and say thank you and shake your hand," said Bloom.

"I just feel very lucky," added Bloom. "For me to have found a home in the National Guard and to feel accepted here and needed - I'm very, very fortunate."

ATTENTION RETIREEES!



SOUTH DAKOTA

MILITARY RETIREEES

Are you retired from the military and want to know what is happening in the South Dakota National Guard?

Visit us on the web and register at: www.sdmr.org and be kept current with the latest news and happenings.

If you do not have a computer please provide us with your
NAME/PHONE NUMBER & MAILING ADDRESS and mail to:
PAO, 2823 West Main Street, Rapid City, SD 57702-8186

SDMR conducts video teleconference meetings you can attend at these armories:
Watertown, Brookings, Sioux Falls, Pierre, Huron, Mitchell, Fort Meade and Rapid City.

If you know of other military retirees, please tell them about our website, and video teleconference meetings in the armories listed above.

Retire and stay connected

By Sgt. Theanne Tangen
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Service members retiring from the military now have the opportunity to stay in touch by becoming a member of the South Dakota Retiree Council. The goal of the council is to provide information to all military retirees on benefits available, current events, retirements, promotions and personnel issues. Through the council, retirees will be able to stay informed and involved on what is happening in the South Dakota National Guard.

Retired Col. Spencer Hawley of Brookings, who spent 30 years in the Guard, is co-chair of the retiree council along with Col. Ronald Czmowski, Joint Force Headquarters, Rapid City. The retiree council was created to improve the communication between the retired service members and the military.

"Once you retire, the day you stop coming to drill, is the day you don't hear another word from the Guard," said Hawley.

According to Hawley, that trend is what motivates the council to brainstorm ideas on how to improve the communication between retired and current service members. The council can also be a way of networking between retirees as well as communicating with current members of the SDNG.

"It is important to keep retirees connected to the military as positive influences in their local communities. Someone who has served 20 to 30 years in the military is a great resource for people who want to learn more," said Hawley.

Retired service members interested in joining the council may register on the following Web site www.sdmr.org or fill out forms at their local South Dakota National Guard armory.

South Dakota and Suriname Partnership

By Staff Sgt. Kristi Niedert
114th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

PARAMARIBO, Suriname – This summer I was fortunate to be included in a small group of media professionals who traveled to Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname, for a public affairs subject matter exchange, as part of the South Dakota-Suriname State Partnership Program.

During our stay we met with a number of professionals from local newspapers and tv and radio stations, sharing different ideas and learning about each other's similarities. There have been several such exchanges since the program started in 2006, such as the visit last February of Suriname officials to South Dakota focusing on leadership exchange.

We were fortunate to be in Suriname for the country's Emancipation Day on July 3. We were also honored to attend the 4th of July celebration hosted at the home of U.S. Ambassador Lisa Bobbie Schreiber Hughes.

The timing of our stay in Suriname was perfect, as the theme of the celebration was "Fireworks over Mount Rushmore." The Embassy staff worked hard and did an amazing job of throwing a party that included burgers and hot dogs, as well as a fantastic fireworks display over the Suriname River and a projection screen display of the faces of Mount Rushmore.



Staff Sgt. Kristi Niedert (center) visits with media representatives in Suriname.

Ours was a short one-week trip, but it was an incredible experience. The lengthy travel time – the flight from South Dakota to Suriname takes one whole day – more than made up for by the amazing atmosphere and friendly people we were met with during our stay.

ATTENTION VETERANS & MILITARY RETIREES

ARMY - AIR FORCE - NAVY - MARINES

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S.D. Division of Veterans Affairs and
the Department Veterans Affairs

will host a

VETERAN & RETIREE BENEFITS SUMMIT

This is for

**VETERANS AND RETIREES
OF ALL BRANCHES OF SERVICE**

*to include active duty, Reserve and
National Guard service members.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
THE TRANSITION ASSISTANCE ADVISOR KEVIN SPEIRS
PHONE: 605.737.6669 • EMAIL: KEVIN.SPEIRS@US.ARMY.MIL

Please attend one of the
**LOCATIONS AND DATES
LISTED BELOW**

and have questions answered
regarding services, benefits and
entitlements.

MONDAY – 21 SEPTEMBER

9 a.m. – Yankton Armory – 204 West 31st Street
7 p.m. – Mitchell Armory – 5501 Airport Road

TUESDAY – 22 SEPTEMBER

9 a.m. – Sioux Falls Armory – 801 W. National Guard Dr.
7 p.m. – Brookings Armory – 300 5th Street

WEDNESDAY – 23 SEPTEMBER

9 a.m. – Watertown Armory – 1900 West Kemp Avenue
7 p.m. – Aberdeen Armory – 115 S. Roosevelt Street

THURSDAY – 24 SEPTEMBER

9 a.m. – Huron Armory – 1030 3rd Street Southwest
7 p.m. – Pierre Armory – 3440 East Highway 34

FRIDAY – 25 SEPTEMBER

9 a.m. – Fort Meade, Bldg. 54 – 54 Sheridan Road

TUESDAY – 29 SEPTEMBER

9 a.m. & 7 p.m. – Rapid City Duke Corning Armory –
Camp Rapid, 2823 West Main Street

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¹Countrywide average price for policyholders who have \$2,500 personal property coverage, \$100,000 liability coverage, and \$5,000 medical payments coverage as of February 2008. Rates vary by location and risk. Rates are subject to change. Eligibility restrictions apply to purchase of property and casualty insurance. Eligibility may change based on factors such as marital status, rank or military status. Applicants must meet underwriting guidelines. Property and casualty insurance provided by United Services Automobile Association, USAA Casualty Insurance Company, USAA General Indemnity Company, Garrison Property and Casualty Insurance Company, USAA County Mutual Insurance Company, USAA Texas Lloyd's Company, San Antonio, TX, and is available only to persons eligible for P&C group membership. Each company has sole financial responsibility for its own products. © 2009 USAA. 92095-0709



ARMY NATIONAL GUARD ★ ARMY RESERVE ★ NAVY RESERVE ★ MARINE RESERVE
COAST GUARD RESERVE ★ AIR NATIONAL GUARD ★ AIR FORCE RESERVE

We all serve. Whether serving our communities or our country, members of the National Guard and Reserve depend on their military units, families, and employers for support. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense agency that seeks to promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees by recognizing outstanding support, increased awareness of the law and resolving conflict through mediation.



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- Get the benefits you deserve—We can help you get the benefits that you have earned, including the 21st Century GI Bill, home loans and service-connected disability.



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